



State of Utah

JON HUNTSMAN, JR.
Governor

GARY HERBERT
Lieutenant Governor

Department of Public Safety

Scott T. Duncan
Commissioner



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Media Contacts:

Brian McInerney, NWS Salt Lake City / Senior Service Hydrologist, 801-971-2033
Jim Pringle, NWS Grand Junction / Warning Coordination Met., 970-243-7007 x726
Nicole Hunter, Dept. of Public Safety, Div. of Homeland Security, 801-541-8145

Terms and Definitions...What to Listen For *Flood Safety Awareness Week Continues Through Friday*

What is the difference between a flood and a flash flood?

A **flash flood** is a rapid (generally within six hours) rise of water along a stream or low-lying area after a heavy rainfall or from the failure of a dam, levee, or ice jam. By definition flash flooding is life-threatening. A **flood** is defined as water overflowing the confines of a river, stream, or body of water. A flood can also occur when water accumulates in poorly drained, low-lying, or urban areas. Floods, known for producing billions of dollars in damage across the United States each year, are also a significant safety hazard.

What to listen for:

The various products detailed below, issued by NOAA's National Weather Service, are designed to warn citizens of developing flooding situations and assist individuals in preparedness activities.

Hazardous Weather Outlooks and/or Special Weather Statements will be issued to alert of the potential for flooding and/or flash flooding. These products provide information on potentially hazardous weather, as much as seven days in advance.

Flood and Flash Flood Watches will be issued when conditions are favorable for flooding or flash flooding, respectively. Watches usually give 12 to 36 hours advance notice and indicate a need for planning, preparation, and an increased awareness of changing weather conditions.

The Flash Flood Potential Rating (FFPR) product will be issued to bridge the gap between outlook products and watches and/or warnings. The FFPR provides a qualitative rating indicative of the potential for flash flooding over the next two days.

Flash Flood Warnings are issued when flash flooding is reported or imminent. A warning indicates the need to take immediate action to protect life and property.

Flood Warnings are issued for flooding along rivers and streams. Point-specific warnings are issued for specific river forecast points and area flood warnings are issued for a generalized area such as an entire county. Again, a warning indicates the need to take immediate action to protect life and property.

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